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SEPTEMBER 5.

The President, Dr. RUSCHENBERGER, in the chair.

Twenty-nine members present.

A paper entitled "Hexagonite, *Goldsmith*, a variety of Tremolite," by Geo. A. Koenig, was presented for publication.

Morphology of the Pear.—Dr. McGRATH placed on the table abnormal fruit of the pear, in appearance resembling huge acorns. Mr. THOMAS MEEHAN took occasion to note the recent advances of morphological knowledge as explaining such phenomena. Even recent text-books taught that a fruit was but modified leaves. The exact truth is that a fruit is leaves *and branch*. When a bud is being formed in the apple, pear, or similar fruits, it may finally be either a flower-bud or a bud producing a new branch. Varying phases of nutrition decide this question. Exactly the nature of this variation we do not know; but we do know that the growth-force in the bud is arrested by some law of nutrition, and, instead of an elongated branch, what would be its series of spirals are drawn together closely, and the whole modified and made to form a flower. Thus, in the pear, it takes five buds to form one full cycle on a pear branch. When growth is arrested to form a flower this first cycle is transformed into a five-lobed calyx, and generally this becomes much enlarged and fleshy, and covers all the other cycles of buds which go to make up the inner layer of flesh terminating in the petals, carpels or core, and so on. Now, in the case before the Academy, the arresting force was imperfect. It had succeeded in forming the outer or calycine verticillate series of buds into a fleshy matter, giving what here might be called the cup of the "acorn," when the accelerating or branch-producing force gained a temporary advantage and pushed on, forming the acorn-like centre, but only to be soon again arrested. This abnormal pear was indeed nothing more than an effort of the tree to produce a branch after a fruit had been decided on; a struggle which was finally decided in favor of the fruit, if we might speak metaphorically in explaining the case.

Natural Hybrids.—Mr. MEEHAN said that modern naturalists were mostly convinced that new forms were evolved from old ones, but how much the new form had been influenced in its creation by a thus far mysterious law of change inherent in the old form, impelling it to bring forth the new one when nature's own good time had come; or how far external influences acted in bringing about these changes, was still a matter for science to solve. He thought